

September 4, 2008

DEQ says fish and vegetation may be affected by Gustav

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality expects to see scattered fish kills across Louisiana in the aftermath of Gustav. Most of these fish kills will be associated with low dissolved oxygen in the water. Low dissolved oxygen results from the organic matter washed into the streams, lakes and bays from storm debris and runoff. As the organic matter in the water is assimilated the oxygen levels will return to levels that will support aquatic life.

In addition, the storm surge has pushed salt water further inland than normally found. This is anticipated to impact the aquatic vegetation that is intolerant to a salty environment. These conditions are expected to stabilize and diminish fairly rapidly.

Environmental concerns should be reported at the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality at its temporary hotline number of 225-219-9919. The regular hotline is 225-219-3640 or 1-888-763-5424 and will be used when power is restored.

A similar fish kill and vegetation disturbance effect was seen following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

DEQ will be conducting aerial and ground reconnaissance, and will be documenting and reporting these conditions.